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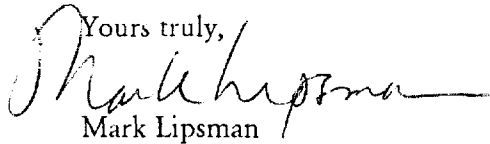
Mr. William Hubbard
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
3500 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Mr. Hubbard:

I have just learned that a comment period is underway regarding mandatory labeling of irradiated foods, and that this period ends on May 18. Unfortunately, I believe that many people who would be interested in expressing support for mandatory labeling are not even aware that the comment period is in effect. I would therefore like to request that you extend the comment period by 60 days. As you are no doubt aware, irradiation is a contentious issue, and I am concerned that in the absence of a greater opportunity for public comment, well-funded and well-organized industry lobbying will prevail.

When the USDA proposed weakened national standards for organic foods, they received over 300,000 comments, predominantly opposed to weaker standards. In that instance, they extended the comment period. Irradiation, along with genetic engineering and the use of toxic sludge, were three of the primary objections to the proposed organic standards. Clearly, people feel strongly about this, so I think it important to insure not only that a comment period is provided but that the public is aware of it. Grass-roots organizations that promote sustainable growth can help publicize the comment period if it's extended.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

Mark Lipsman

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